

Reader Response for  
**THE BEGGAR KING  
AND THE SECRET  
OF HAPPINESS**

Featured at the Library OnLine Book Club



DEAR SUZANNE.....

The excerpt from the book shook me; I re-read it many times, and I will read it daily now. Perhaps this book will let me see things more clearly. Thank you for this pick - I would love a copy if it is possible. Jill

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Just the few lines you printed said something to me. I guess you could say it reinforced a lesson I recently learned. Over my 50 years I've finally learned when I think I've gotten a lesson, but I keep getting that lesson reinforced, then I need to pay attention, I may not have it as fully integrated as I thought. Thanks for the good reads every day. It is good to read with friends. Linn F

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Suzanne,

I went on to the web site to read a sampling of "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy. A lot of the time I am scared off by books that are called non-fiction because I find them really dull to read. I have just always had trouble with things that feel like history because they are so dry. Many times I am intrigued by the subject matter, but I just like stories so much better.

So here is a non-fiction book that reads like a story. It was really fun to read and really caught my attention. It seems there are non-fiction books that can be wonderful and inviting. Thanks, Lydia A

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Dear Suzanne,

So far, from the first segment of what I've read and from your highlight pages 117 and 118, I think that the author is really "hitting the nail" on the head in terms of absolutely making "real" the problems of the 21st century, at least here in the Western world.

I think that the author has managed to use a common human problem over time, brought it into the present, and that it presents a "great gift" for anyone willing to take the time to read it and absorb it.

I would love a copy to take to my library bookclub as a strong recommendation. I can't wait to read it in its entirety. Thank for picking it for this week's on-line selection. Susan M

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I would love to read this book! What an odd way to think of life, but once you think about it for a minute, it does make sense. Thanks for sharing the few pages with us. Charisse M

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The first installment caught my interest, and teases with a cliffhanger at the end of the first installment. I'm looking forward to tomorrow's installment. Thanks so much, Gary K

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Suzanne,

"The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness" is a great read! I love how bin Izzy introduces each chapter with a story from various mythology and his points are very effective when he draws parallels or contrasts between his experiences and those of his parents. I found myself drawn into his story and it is one of those (Web) pageturners that I couldn't put down! Thanks for sharing this book. --Steve

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Suzanne: I've enjoyed the excerpt from The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness. I'm going through a difficult divorce right and numerous other things collapsing in my life right now. Some days are particularly rough--everything's my fault--but then I pick myself up and try to get on with my life. The book gave me an insight that I can go--I choose my life story. --Debbie M

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Suzanne,

It was nice to know that a book could give you peace and comfort. After a year of many trials and personal tribulations, I feel much the way you did...I began reading "The Begger King" at the website you provided and enjoyed the excerpt. Please submit my name for the drawing for one of the books. I think I really need to read it. Thanks for letting us read with you. Patricia Williams

I'm hooked, I'll have to finish reading the book now! I really enjoy sampling the books in the book club. I have found so many to add to my list of books I have to read. Thanks so much! Sherry

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Suzanne

I just finished reading the sample on The Beggar King And The Secret of Happiness. I would like to have my name entered in the drawing for this book. It appears to be something that I need to have in my life at this time, or at any time for that matter.

Joel ben Izzy must be a wonderful storyteller of nonfiction. There are so many of the so-called non fiction books out there, but much of it is hateful and demeaning of the authors and to the readers. I will of course purchase this book at a later date if I do not win one in the drawing. Please keep up your good work. I look forward to your reviews. Rosemary R

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Oh my Suzanne,

I usually don't enjoy non-fiction books, but this one sucked me in immediately. I even ran to the library on my lunch break to find out what happened to his voice. This is a book that will join "Thursdays With Morrie" on my list of read agains! I read the sample twice and it gave me something new each time. Thank you! Glenda B

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What a good book. Enjoyed the excerpt very much. Hope I win a copy. Thanks. Cecilia S

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I just read the sample from the book that you mentioned in today's book club. I have been receiving your daily emails for about 3 months now and I have to say that I LOVE the daily reads. It gives me a great break time in the morning and has renewed my passion in reading. Since having my son two and half years ago I felt that I had lost a lot of my own identity. Being a working, single mother my life is focused on doing well at work and being the best mom I can be for my precious boy. Having the book club has reminded me to take some time out for myself and almost lose myself in the tales. This book however struck another cord altogether. I love the mixture of relating the wonderful art of storytelling and the lessons we can learn from these adventures and how they can help us grow in our own. The part of the section that struck me the most was.... He shrugged, the pot full of bricks bobbing up and down. "I don't know. You'll have to ask someone wiser than me. But here's what I do know. In this life you have a choice. You can laugh along with God, or you can cry all alone. Now, which are you going to do?" Being a single mother there have been many, many times that I have wanted to cry alone, but have decided instead to see the brighter side and know that I am completely blessed to have my son. But in reading this I see that I am blessed with way more then just that. I have my son and my health and ....as I am writing this I am thinking that I need to spit three times. I would just like to say BRAVO to the author. This is an amazing book and I can't wait until this afternoon where I can go and get it.

I just finished reading 'The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness' section you posted for us. It hit home im many ways. I too have been going through tests for my thyroid. A bit of worry is still there since we don't know anything for sure at this point. Reading I felt as if I was suppose to read this now. I guess the saying is right you will be in the right place at the right time. Thanks Nancy

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Dear Suzanne,

"There are stories in this world that need to rattle around inside your brain for twenty years before they reveal a final, hidden grain of truth." As a writer who has studied writing for nearly 20 years, and through all that study have lost my voice. I believe that "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy, will help me to find the key that will at last open that door for me. NANCY

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Thanks for the excerpt of the book! Everyone's personal experiences effect the way that our lives are lived. So often a character can "escape" from a book and make an apperance in our lives. I love to read and am often influenced by books or stories that I read. Sometimes, it is as simple as retelling a part of a story to someone else. Often times books can make us look more deeply into what we have done in the past and what we will do in the future. What an interesting way to phrase this experience as a character escaping! I'd love to read more! Thanks, Christine P

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This book seems like a winner!! I love the excerpt so far and can't wait to read the rest. I am a sucker for stories and legends, as well. The more fanciful, the better. Enter me into the drawing for the book! Ellen T

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Suzanne--I've never written to you before, but I've been enjoying your letters and excerpts for several years. We've chosen a couple books for our book club from your recommendations, too. After reading the excerpt from The Beggar King..., I wanted to write you and express how compelling I thought this author's stories were. Our family has had quite a few rough spots lately, and I can see where the author's trials would hit home. Thank you for bringing this book to our collective attention :-). I would like to be considered for a copy of this book. Thanks for your fun and informative program! Lynn K

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Suzanne, I just finished reading the sample of "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness". It is wonderful and leaves me wanting more. Like so many people I am looking for that secret and often have to remind myself that it is right here. I am between jobs and trying to decide what direction to go with my career. This book sounds like the reminder I need -- to remember that I am who I am regardless. Thanks for the book selections. I have enjoyed many of them. This one I will definitely find and finish. Pat B

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Suzanne,

I just finished reading the preview of 'The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness'. I can't wait to get the book and finish it. I really like the way the author weaves his own personal story in and out and between the other stories. This is a book that I really want to finish to hear what the author has to say as well as to see how his own situation progressed. Thanks again for another incredible book and author to read. After reading your excerpt I find that this is definitely a book written for me. Doreen

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I have not read the book yet, but I think I need to. From what you wrote, I realized that I need to stay in my story, if only to see what happens next. Thanks for letting us all read with you, Amy

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What an incredible and fascinating first installment of Beggar King. I can't wait for the second. It was like reading Isaac Bashevis Singer at his best. I read the Beggar King..... what I read was really good, I would love to have a copy of it if there are any left. I wanted to finish reading the story and it ended in the middle. Kinda like "I want to see what happens, more ,more!" LOL. Really cool book exerpt. Judy G

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Dear Suzanne,

As a storyteller myself I appreciate the strong voice that Joel ben Izzy has with this book - his story comes through as a conversation - this is just the kind of book I look for, thank you for sharing it with us.

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Hi Suzanne,

I almost didn't read the excerpt of this book but then thought "why not?" so I have read it and it has done the most amazing thing for me today--it touched my heart. I have been going through a very tough time with my life and I have felt so completely alone. Somehow, reading this excerpt and the one you gave that touched you has helped--it made me want to cry. I had really just told myself that I just had to get up each day even if things--my life and health were going badly--I was giving up and turning off my feelings when I could. Even if I don't win this book, I will get it. Stories have always opened worlds for me. . . whether its fiction or nonfiction. Thank you so much. God bless you!

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I just read the first chapter of "The beggar king...",and I was surprised that I enjoyed it so much,and would very much like to read all of it. It seems very unusual. Thank you Jean.

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Dear Suzanne,

This book does seem very interesting. Thank Valerie for me too. How many authors are brave enough to write about King Solomon and his wisdom or lack there of. Mary

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Suzanne,

I LOVE this book. I hate to wait til the end of the week to find out if you drew my name before rushing out and buying the book. Like most avid readers I am a frustrated story teller. They never come out the way I want them to. I read constantly and when I'm not reading for myself, I read to my children. I need this book and probably all of his CDs for new stories to share with my children. Amy S

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Well, I didn't think I'd enjoy it, but I couldn't stop reading the excerpt of "The Beggar King!" I hope I win a copy, but, even if I don't, I'll be getting a copy from the library.

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Hello,

Wow! The first chapter is great! Please include me in your drawing for a copy of this book. I need to know what happens and how it ends. Thanks! Sincerely, Donna

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Thank you so much for the opportunity to read excerpts from this book. I will look forward to buying this one. Kathy in Texas

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The little bit I read about this book really intrigued me and I can't wait to read more. Ecspecially after hearing your comments also. I would love to be eligible for a copy! Jan T

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Thank you!!!! for this email today. I, too, am in the middle of a story that I sometimes want out of; this mini-book review really helped me to put today into perspective. I love your intros and look forward to them even if I don't have time to read books right now. Thank you! Ruth R

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Suzanne,

I've read the exerpt from "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness" and like it very much so far. He has an optimistic view of life which can only be good for the reader. Please enter me in the drawing for the book. Thank you, Phyllis

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Suzanne,

This book has really hooked me and I look forward to reading the whole thing. I plan on putting in a request for it as soon as I finish this email. Thanks for your book club, it's always fun! Carolyn at the Library

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Dear Suzanne:

Oh, oh, oh!!!! The Beggar King.....started with the excerpt and want to continue with it... A storyteller with wisdom! It flows so well, what a gift! Considering it is Thanksgiving here in Canada, I am truly thankful that your friend sent this book to you and also that you are sharing it with us..... Some things are just meant to be..... Thank, Katrina

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It's been a long time since I read something that made me ache to know the outcome. I can't wait to get my own copy and find out what happens. Mr. Izzy is an awesome storyteller.

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Dear Suzanne,

I found the book fascinating. I would love to read the rest of the book, Best Wishes, GEORGIA L.E

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Hello.

I loved what I read today in your email in reference to "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness", by Joel ben Izzy. I am interested in reading on Thank you. Kelly H

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Looking forward to tomorrow's portion of this book....seems wonderful so far! thanks, Judy

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I read the small part of Beggar King that you had written about in the newsletter for the week of 10/11. I liked it. I am off to my local library to obtain a copy to start reading. Thank you for all the great suggestions. Carmela

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Dear Suzanne,

I am eager to find this book, "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy, to read. I really enjoyed what I have read so far and would love to finish the book. Thank you for introducing us to so many good books. Have a great week! Janina H

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Dear Suzanne,

I am emailing you about the book 'The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness.' It is great so far. I can't wait to read the rest, and if I am not lucky enough to win one of your copies, it is on my list for my next trip to the library. Books like this are so comforting; they offer simple stories that can change your view and help you put your own problems in perspective. I love stories that have morals without being too sappy. So far the author is doing a wonderful job of including funny and interesting anecdotes. Ok, now I want to win one of the fifteen copies you have! Thanks! Julie P

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More! More! More!

I like very much what you excerpted...so now I will go get the book! Even in that little bit, there is truth and wisdom, in the story around the stories. Thanks for bringing this book to me! Susan D

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THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR STORIES.

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I would love to be considered for a copy of Joel ben Izzy's book. The first little glimpse we got was already a grabber. I would love to share the book you obviously received at the right time. Thinking of you and your family,  
Pam M

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'The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness' I have been glued to my computer screen reading this book, but have not yet finished, as my family must eat. I think I will come and check out a copy so I can finish reading it. Thank you for passing this book on. Blessings, Melissa

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DEAR SUZANNE,  
I JUST READ THE EXCERPT IN YOUR LINK TODAY FOR THE BOOK 'THE BEGGAR KING AND THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS' AND I NEED TO FINISH IT. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME SINCE LOSING MY MOM IN APRIL. I HAVE BEEN SO SAD AND MISS HER SO MUCH, AS SHE WAS SUCH A BIG PART OF MY LIFE SINCE MY OWN DISABLING ILLNESS. SO ENTER ME IN THE CONTEST. CAROL

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I just read part 1 of this book and i am quite intrigued. I can't wait to read the rest of the parts. Thanks for picking up this book. Regards, Kiran

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After reading the excerpt, I know that I need to read the rest of the story!! Marlene C

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I read the sample from "The Beggar King and The Secret of Happiness"! I got the to the end and was looking for more. Please enter me in your drawing! I really want to read the rest of this very excellent book! Thanks and have a great week! Diane

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I adored the excerpt of 'The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness' I just read. Enter me into the drawing for the book. Thanks. P. McD

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Having read the preview, I need to see the rest of it and get to the pages that you were referring to in your review. I love the idea of characters in a story talking to each other. I, also, like how the stories never really stop. The elements of everything he introduces linger so that, I'm assuming, all the stories will conclude at once.

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I teach eighth grade English and I was thinking about how the pages I've read already could be used to show the kids how accessible non-fiction can be. I would love to see a copy of the book in print if you wouldn't mind sharing one of those 15 copies with me. It would be very much appreciated. Kamau R

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Have just read the first installment of the Beggar King and it has peaked my interest already. Will continue to read it. Thank you

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what i just read about this book. what you just sent, has touched my very soul. can't wait to get a copy. will watch for it thanks carol n

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Suzanne: Wow...what a find! My whole family could use to read this book. I'm thinking this will make great xmas presents.

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Hi I am Sarah Taylor, I am writing in response to the book, "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness." I think that the book sounds very interesting. When I think about it, it says that everyone's life is a story being played out. And that is very right. We all live according to someones plan, whether it be our own, our parents, or anyone else it doesnt matter. I would like to read more into the book and you said that you had copies to give. I don't mind if I don't get one, but I am very interested in that book.

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Sarah

I was fascinated with the story. It kept me glued to every word waiting for what would be next. I didn't expect that I could be so intrigued with a story on that subject. I was surprised that I wanted to read more. So long, Dorothy D

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Suzanne,

I must read this book. The little snippet you provided was enough for me to want to read more. What little I read from the link provided was enough for me to spend time with this book! Thanks as always for introducing many great books that I would never have found on my own. Glenda S

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It's so funny how sometimes something unexpectedly comes along that seems to help put things into perspective. That's exactly what happend today when I read "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness." The line in the book ... "you make plans and God laughs" is exactly what I needed to hear today. I don't believe God laughs at our troubles, but instead laughs at our arrogance in thinking that we are in control. That line put things in perspective for me today. Thank you for sending such an inspirational phrase my way. Please enter me in the drawing to win one of your fifteen copies of this book. Thanks again, Nikki C.

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Dear Suzanne, I'm looking forward to reading the complete "Beggar King" book. The excerpt that you provided gives me the impression it is one of those reads that makes one count one's blessings, and we have so many. Regards, Janet L

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HI! I just read the sample of the begger king... and it was great Joel ben Izzy captures me immediately! I need his book!

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Dear Suzanne,

"The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy appeals to me on many different levels, but one level in particular. I read so many books, so many of which I could read again a few weeks later and not remember it. For this reason, I try to buy only paperbacks. But every once in a while, I'll read a book that so appeals to me that I'll remember it for a very long time. Those I want in hardback to keep on the shelf to read again later, not because of bad memory but because I want to experience it again. Sincerely, Candi H

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Dear Suzanne:

The Beggar King is not a book that I would have ever chosen to read on my own, but after reading the excerpt, I really want to finish it. Please enter me in the drawing for a free book. I find the fables and stories that the author uses to illustrate and explain his life story are great. It is like the reader is learning an important truth of life, but doesn't even realize it because he or she is caught up in the story. I really want to know how the author found happiness after losing his voice, so please enter me in the contest. Dawn S

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Love this book. Already have it on hold at my local Library! Martha B

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Suzanne—Can't wait to read this entire book... Just your little blurb really hit a cord with me.! Thanks for a great read! Debbie D

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Hi Suzanne, I'm enjoying "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy. I'm fascinated by life's "coincidences" and believe there is always meaning in them, so I especially liked the story at the end of the Prologue (about the man in China with the horse) ... full of "aha!" realizations. Please enter me in the drawing, my husband and I would love to have a copy of this book. Thank you, --Mary Jo H

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I absolutely love this author's style and grace in writing. He brings even the most inane parts of life alive. I would be proud to read and own this book. To pass it's stories and knowledge on to my family and circle of friends. Thank you, Anthony R

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Dear Suzanne, I enjoyed reading about "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy. It reminded me of how as a child, I used to listen to my grandmother tell her stories about the old days. Storytelling is such a gift. I find I can recount the stories she told, but often when I tried to tell them to my kids, the stories would not carry the same quality as when she told them. She was a wonderful grandmother and a fantastic storyteller. I believe Mr. Izzy definitely has the gift. I would love to read his book because, although, I cannot escape my own story, I know I will enjoy the distraction. I think I would enjoy a free copy of this book. Please put me at the top of the list! Thank you.

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Dear Suzanne - Seems like an incredible book - one that can bring a "light bulb" moment (as Oprah would say!). Please enter me in your drawing - I need new lighting! Debbie D

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Dear Suzanne, I loved reading the excerpts from the "Beggar King." It came at a time when I was having a hard time finishing my last book. I never seemed to sit down long enough to get back into the plot.

This book looks like a good "porch sitting" book. These are books my husband and I pick up after our exercise walks. We cool down by sitting together, I read a chapter aloud and we discuss the book. We haven't found many really good "porch sitting" books but "The Beggar King" looks like a good possibility. Thanks, Judy G

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Thank you Suzanne for including this book in with your regular books. Joel writes like he must tell stories: smoothly and with fascination so that you turn the pages as quickly as you can. I was sorry when the excerpt came to an end, and look forward to reading the whole book. I enjoy your daily pieces of life, too! Julie M

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I like it. It is along the lines of Tuesdays With Morrie or the Five People You Meet in Heaven. I always look for books I can recommend to my daughters and friends. This looks like one of them. It has emotion, but lightens it with the humor. I look forward to finishing it. Fred B

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Great Book!!! So glad I found you. I've got so many new choices to read and some not to read. Thanks, Janet M

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I can see why your office assistant urged you to consider Mr. Izzy's book for "our" club--it offers a fresh way of understanding his life through stories, and it makes it difficult to wait for tomorrow's email! Tussy N

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Suzanne--

Wow, you really found a great one this time! I work in an academic environment, where matters of philosophy and "truth" (or "Truth") are much in discussion. Even the excerpts that I have read over the past two mornings have provided material for interesting conversations with some of the students here. And, of course, I am sure to let them know the name of the book, and about where I found out about it (this really neat online book club...)!  
Steffanie M. B

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I'm intrigued. My interest is highly peaked. The King Solomon story alone was a page turner - then reading Joel ben Izzy's introduction sealed it. I'd love a copy - thanks for turning us on to new stuff. Michelle

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Suzanne, What a wonderfully lyric book! The imagery is fabulous and definitely keeps your interest throughout. It's almost hard to imagine that this book is non-fiction, it reads so well and draws you in. I've found, in the past, that most non-fiction is dry and boring. Kind of like having to read history books or textbooks for class. This, however, is quite refreshing and a delight to read. Angie

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Dear Suzanne,

Although this is not my style (writing one of "those" letters), my daughter forwarded the email to me that speaks of this book. Both my parents are dealing with cancer (one with the aftermath side effects of the treatments which require biweekly hospital visits, the other with the horrendous side effects of both chemo and radiation being done simultaneously). A good friend is doing the same. I have been experiencing what everyone else who lives with this situation does. I would love to read this book. As I type this, I wonder if it would help relieve the stress that this has wrought for me. (I have found myself hooked up to the EKG probes several times.) Thank you for considering me. Deborah P

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What a wonderful book to share. My husband is going thru chemo now...has been since April... his third time around with chemo for bladder cancer. What a brave man Joel ben Izzy is. And his stories make you want the book to keep going. I'd love to have one of the books. Aloha for sharing. Patti

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Good morning Suzanne,

Thanks for sharing "The Beggar King and The Secret of Happiness". Ordinarily I would not read a book such as this because neither the title nor the cover appeals to me. However, after the first few lines, I was hooked. I think this would be a lovely book to read, as well as read to the children in my family. It seems like it will be a great conversation starter with the children, that's chocked full of wisdom. For instance, the story about King Solomon and how he was outwitted by the demon, simply because although he remembered, he did not follow his father's words which resulted in the loss of his Kingdom. This is an ideal story to share with the young ones in my family to illustrate how important it is to listen to and do what your Parent's tell you, for your own protection. I would love to have a copy of this book. Rhonda I

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The Book is great and I have enjoyed reading about Solomon. Would like to be entered into the drawing for a copy. Sometimes we forget that blessings can be a curse and the curse can be the blessing. Thanks again for all the work and the reading is great. Makes my day. Sincerely Sheron H

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Dear Suzanne-

I'm taken with your latest non-fiction book, can't wait to see what happens next and how an author combines these stories with his own. This is a fantastic book!! I just have to get it and read it all. Thanks so much for introducing this to me. Wayne J

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Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for the link for "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy. I was really impressed with the way ben Izzy went about telling stories through more stories. I am a creative writer myself and am always interested in creative experimentation. This book seems to go on to explore the fable of life through the stories that were passed on to us through the ages and in that, it is unique.

I also enjoyed the straightforward way the author plunges into his own story - his frank manner truly drew me in as a reader. This is the first e-mail I received from the Pre-Pub Book Club as I have joined recently and I definitely do not regret my decision to join.

I also liked the idea that the tales and fables that we grow up hearing are passed on to us because they made a difference to the people who experienced them. Each of our lives are important in that they could become the fables of tomorrow. Like the story of the Cricket who Jumped over the Moon in Chapter 2, it is an encouragement to strive for one's goals, whatever they may be. I look forward to reading "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," and discovering the "secret of happiness" myself. -- Radhika

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Hi Suzzanne! This book is GREAT! I can't wait to read the whole thing. Well thanks for your newsletter an have a good day! Michelle M

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I love fables and stories from the past. I was very excited to start reading this excerpt, especially after reading the description on the book jacket. After day one, I was left hanging on speechless: What will King Solomon do????? I couldn't wait to get to the next day so I could find out what the next fable would be. I am sure the rest of the book will be equally as enticing! Thanks again for another great book! Michelle

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Please put me in the drawing for this book. It is captivating--the author has written it in such a way that one cannot put it down! I want to finish it! Thank you. Lynn

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I can't wait to continue reading...and would definitely love to have this as part of my own working collection.

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Thank you for choosing this book to be previewed. I will definitely have to find it somewhere and finish it. The author knew what he was doing when he allowed "The Beggar King..." to be previewed. After reading the preview, I had to go back to the introduction and reassure myself that it is really nonfiction. It is so beautifully written that when the preview stopped so abruptly, I didn't want to quit reading. This is definitely a book that I will have to finish. Joel bin Izzy is indeed a story-teller and is blessed with that wonderful gift of "having a way with words." His descriptions of people and places seem to magically create them in this reader's mind. Even though I have only read the 5-chapter preview, I feel certain that this storyteller's story will touch many people's lives. I think this was the author's purpose in writing it, and I feel he has succeeded. Thank you, Joel bin Izzy, for this story-teller's story. -- Joyce

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Hi Suzanne,

Here I am at the office reading the Beggar King and not working! So far, I've only read the first part, but I'm hooked and can't wait to read the rest. The author paints an absolutely tremendous picture for his reader - I don't understand why I haven't read anything of his before this. It makes me seriously wonder "where are all the 'real' storytellers, anyway?" Like you said in your "Dear Reader" column, some times it's all about "perfect timing." Thanks to you for the link to his site and thanks to Mr Izzy for "taking me away from the office this morning..." Thanks again! laura w

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I read the excerpt and would dearly love to read the rest. Thank you for sending this on to us... one of the many wonderful books I most likely never would have discovered any other way. Wow. Thank you, Toni L

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Can't wait for the rest of the chapters! Have already sent this to alert my book group about a new and inspirational reading! Mailed my 29-yr old son the chapter; he usually ignores my suggestions. This one stirred much interest and he's now on line at DearReader.com.

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Dear Suzanne, Could you please put my name into the hat for the book drawing? I am really enjoying this week's read. Joel ben Izzy has such a powerful voice, it is sucking me in even though today is only Tuesday and we're two selections in! I always know that is the sign of a really incredible teller of tales. When a story reaches out and grabs you, you have to follow. I'm looking forward to the next three day's reads!  
Thanks as always, Aynsley M

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I was immediately captivated by this read, possibly because I grew up in 'the Valley' to which the author refers at the beginning, but I think more so by the compelling nature of his voice and his stories. I know there will be some important life lessons to be learned from this book, based upon the teaser you gave us from pages 117 and 118! Thanks for providing this one! Warm regards, Evelyn

---

Hi Suzanne,  
What a storyteller Joel is! He had me captivated throughout each story and I am anxious to find out what happens to his voice. I have been told that I should be a storyteller which is something quite different for me in the second half of my life. I would love to read the rest of Joel's stories and about him. We could use more wise fables in this world to teach young and old. Please make me one of the winners of his book. Wishing you joy, Renee Oler D

---

Dear Suzanne,  
Of all the books I have read to date, this one really touches me the most! After many tragedies over the past 3 1/2 years, I am now seeking spiritualism and peace. When my son was tragically killed I lost my purpose and work as my work was deeply connected to my son. This past year I also lost my husband and the remaining part of who I was slipped even further. Thank God for family and friends as I owe my life to them.

I am learning that perspective is every thing and it is clear to me that Joel ben Izzy knows this well. I think I may have found a book that will teach me more of what I need to know right now. As an educator and lover of books and story telling, I well know their power. I believe this story teller can help me further down the path to finding myself. Thank you for reading with me! Nancy S

---

Suzanne, I'm hooked after the first installment--it's like going back in time to when I read fairy tales as a little girl! Somehow it feels comforting... Diana

---

You have done it yeat again (or Valerie has) I can not wait to read Beggar King! It is always nice to get a new refreshing point of view and different type of story. Thanks so so much for all you do! Cari in CA

---

Dear Suzanne:  
I started the "Beggar King" although I am not a reader of your non-fiction series, and am totally absorbed in the book's content. No wonder you enjoyed it so much. Please convey my appreciation to the author for the pleasure he is bringing to me and the friends and family I will tell about the book. Barb H

---

Suzanne,

This is my second email to you: I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed the excerpt from Mr. Izzy's book. As I read the story of the cricket, I cried because it made me think of my dad who recently died from cancer. Mr. Izzy is a storytelling genius with a beautiful heart. I cannot wait to read the entire book and pass it along to my friends and family all of whom I know will enjoy it as much as I enjoyed the excerpt. Again, thank you for giving the link to the excerpt! Laura W

---

Suzanne, Thanks so much for this book selection! I teach a world literature course in high school, and we always begin with mythology and folktales from around the world. I tell the kids that learning their stories is the first step to understanding any people. It looks as if this book has potential to be added to my reading list for the course. One of the best things about your book club is finds like this that I might never have discovered on my own. I am very grateful Suzanne, Hope your test went well.

After reading the first excerpt I was hooked. I checked out a copy from the library. While I plan to continue reading with you this week, I will definitely complete the entire book on my own. Stories, like names can have such incredible power. I agree, you do not always find meaning in stories, or adventures, or life immediately. But with patience, I believe comes understanding and insight. Thanks for sharing your stories with all of us, Karen

---

Suzanne, About "The Beggar King..." An amazing book. Reminds me of when I first read Twain and O'Henry. Authors that are both entertaining but incredibly thought provoking below the surface. Fun! Thank for finding these jewels. Trish

---

This book totally captured my attention the moment I opened it! So creative in it's formatting and captivating in it's content, I started reading and couldn't stop. Joel ben Izzy is a fascinating storyteller, not only using the words of others but in finding his own. I would cherish a copy of this book. Thank you for connecting us to so many reading opportunities, Suzanne! Renee B

---

I really enjoyed the sample from this book. It seems to be full of stories of wisdom. I also liked how easy it was to read. Some books just wear me out because they are difficult to read. Thank you. Julie

---

Thank you for sharing this excerpt. I was sad to come to the end so quickly. The insights shared in the first few pages are interesting. Our perceptions really do affect our reality. I can't wait to read more. Thank you again for sharing. Donna

---

This is an entertaining book. I like that you find non-fiction of a serious nature and light-hearted also. -Donna H

---

Suzanne, First I want to tell you how much I love reading with you every morning! Your emails always bring a smile to my face. A lot of the things you write about in your "Dear Reader" column are things that we all go through from time to time. So thank you!

I admit that I was skeptical about "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness", but I went to the website to skim over it. After reading a bit of it, I've found that it's one of my favorite type of books. The kind that you read a little bit and get instantly hooked...the story reaches out and grabs you and you just get completely lost in the story. You were right when you said that it's one of those "perfect timing" things. I also really like the proverb from the Chinese story "The Lost Horse" at the beginning of the book..."What seems like a blessing may be a curse. What seems like a curse may be a blessing.". That's so very true. :- ) Heather

---

Dear Suzanne,

I'm completely and utterly captivated by the beginning of "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness." Obviously, Joel ben Izzy is a magnificent storyteller. I love the stories he's woven into his narrative. And any book talking about life purpose and happiness beyond making money must be well worth reading. Thank you for telling me about good books! Sondra Eklund

---

Suzanne, I can tell, that when I get this book from the library, it will be one I WON'T be able to put down, and I'll lose LOTS of sleep staying up reading it, turning page after page, never stopping at the end of a chapter! Susan

---

Hi Suzanne, The book is about life and how much we trust or don't trust ourselves. It's about the choice of fear and how it affects ones outlook on life. It is something we all know inherently, but we forget and need to be reminded of our own power to create and see what makes us happy. I need to be reminded so would very much like to have a copy of this book Thanks, Red

---

I really enjoyed the excerpts of this book. I have MS and the problems encountered by these characters are all too familiar. Even the tao ism is a helpful practice to become at peace with your surroundings. Center yourself and make others comfortable with "Not so perfect" actions. I really like this book, it can motivate readers to THINK and realize how "lucky" you really are.

---

Dear Suzanne, Joel ben Izzy writes with a clarity that seems simple and I think will turn out not to be. To me it is like painting or illustrating with words, an emotional landscape? I am so glad you made that much of the book available to us.

---

The book is very intriguing. I love stories and storytellers. I have read the Chinese story of the lost horse before. I loved it. The book seems very promising and holds out the hope of magic. I like that - I like hope and happy endings, whether they are obviously happy or not. I expect this to turn out happy though not all things will be perfect - or what is usually perceived as perfect. I expect to enjoy this book, especially if it continues with the intervals of stories. If you don't send me one of these, I'll probably have to go buy it sometime. I don't know if they'll have it at the library. Susan F

---

I just loved reading the except. I was at work and I could not stop reading it. I just read The Five People You Meet in Heaven last week (a little late) and loved it! The Beggar King... kind of reminded me of that book. I know if I don't win one of your books, I have put the book on my reading list and will get to it. I love your readings every day. It's the high point of my mornings. Jean

---

dear suzanne,

so far, i am very intrigued by this book. i am quite captivated by the interweaving of storytelling about this man's life. sincerely, diane

---

Suzanne, I am enjoying reading The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness. I like the way the author combines storytelling with his own life. This is a very effective technique and keeps the reader interested in what is going to happen next. As a former high school librarian, I think that this book would be useful in the high school English curriculum, as well as in psychology classes. Like you, I have a need to read this book because I am struggling with my Mother's Alzheimer's. I am glad you selected it. Janet M

---

Please put my name in the drawing for The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness. I am enjoying the emails and can hardly wait for each new day's installment. Diana D

---

What a great starter: this author is so engaging. I need to get the book and read the rest of the story! His images and quotes from Yiddish (People make plans, God laughs) are so fresh for me because I've not heard them before, but they are universal. His use of words is FUN! And I can picture him speaking because of the great photo on the back. Thanks for introducing the book to me.

---

Dear Suzanne:

I really enjoy chuckling with this guy. He is quick and witty. He writes as if speaking to the reader and tells an impelling story. He really is an accomplished story teller. I am from Irish background and they say we can talk the back legs off a chair but I think you author Joel ben Izzy takes that prize. He is a natural talent. I am enjoying his stories. It is so personal and real. I also enjoy most of your selections. Bye Sue

---

Suzanne,

I read your excerpt from "The Beggar King and The Secret of Happiness." I have to say that although I'm not usually into Non-fiction books which what I guess this would be considered, I did enjoy this and picked up a copy of the book as a gift for my friend Thanks for another great pick!

---

Hi Suzanne, I am in the nonfiction book club, and when I started reading The Beggar King, I found myself truly intrigued. I would love to be considered for a copy of this book. Thank you for this opportunity, and thank you for this great program. Sincerely, Anne Froyen M

---

The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness"---it was SO easy to read this morning! Thanks for the wakeup reads.

---

So far I love Joel ben Izzy. His life, times, religion, etc. are so different from my experience that I am mesmerized. Love reading with my friend Suzanne! Irene B

---

Izzy is able to give us a blueprint to lead us out of the maze of our lives. I want a copy! :)

---

Hello Suzanne,

I was almost late for work on Monday, when I started reading this book. Mr. Izzy is very talented in how he mixes his story with fables. As always, Vanda F

---

Suzanne,

I read the sample of "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness" by Joel ben Izzy; I was really interested in his story, it's fascinating. There was, and sometimes still is a time in my life when I'm searching for happiness. Then someone told me happiness is what's around you where you currently are. It's so hard to see what's surrounding us, we have to step back to see it. What a wonderful book and story that goes to the heart. Thank you for providing such books on your bookclub reading list. Brad B

---

I have read the excerpt from The Beggar King and the Secret to Happiness by Joel ben Izzy. I thoroughly enjoyed it and think it would be a good read. Register me for a chance at the free book. Thanks. Joyce D

---

dear suzanne,  
i am sure i can use this book. hope i will be lucky enough to get it. may

---

Hi Suzanne,  
I'm finding this book very interesting. It's making me think of all the choices I've made in my life and how I used to think what happiness was.

---

Dear Suzanne,  
I love this book and reading it your column today were both exactly what I needed. I am having one of those weeks where I'm struggling to feel hopeful and not to beat myself up too badly. Thanks for letting me know this book exists. If I don't win one, I will certainly pick up a copy for myself. Thanks again. Michele

---

JOEL BEN IZZY IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE AUTHORS AFTER READING HIS BOOK I WANTED TO GO TO A STORYTELLING FESTIVAL. HE IS JUST SO INTERESTING AND HOLDS YOUR INTEREST THROUGH OUT THE BOOK I JUST LOVE HIS BOOKS.

---

Hi Enter me in to the drawing for the free book, please. This books looks like it will be intriguing on many levels - a delight to read with real depth and nuggets to cherish. I'm thinking of two people to give it to for Xmas. Jean P

---

Hi Suzanne,  
Today is Wednesday, my third day of reading The Beggar King and the Secret Of Happiness, it looks like a winner and I would be interested in a copy. I can see why you were attracted to it. Your Dear Reader today tells me you have your moments, as we all do, where you struggle a bit to find those elusive moments of happiness. Best Wishes, Bob L

---

hey Suzanne -  
I love what I have read so far of BEGGAR KING ..... enter me in the drawing, please thanks Matt S

---

Good morning Suzanne!  
Oh, this one is fantabulous. Storytellers are an amazing breed-weaving Truth and magic into my imagination in such creative ways. Thanks for sharing this one!

---

DEAR SUZANNE  
I WAS HOOKED WITH THIS BOOK THE FIRST DAY. HE IS A GOOD STORYTELLER BUT THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS IS BEING REVEALED AND THAT IS WISDOM I NEED. I LIKE HIS KNOWLEGDE OF THE BIBLE. MY LIBRARY DOESN'T HAVE THIS BOOK AND I WOULD TO RECEIVE ONE. THANKS MAXINE

---

love this book already, and I've only gotten through the first three days. I too, have had curses turn to blessings and vice-versa. It is most difficult to see the blessings if at first it looks like a curse, with practice, however (I'm almost 40) I hope to get it right!

---

Suzanne, I am so enjoying this book. I can't wait each morning to read it and will have to buy it. Some of the stories are so familiar in part because of Bible stories I know. Thank you so much for your great selections and sharing them with us !!

---

I love to hear and tell stories, so this book is perfect for me. I hope I win a copy. Mary J

---

Suzanne,

Please enter me for a copy of this book! I love folk tales, and this one seems to have all the hooks and cliches to make it captivating, "a voice as slippery as his skin!"... Thanks, Elsa

---

Thanks, Suzanne, for the sample of this very readable and heartwarming book. It's a very promising appetizer and I'm looking forward to the complete meal. Your suggestions are always superb. Wilma D

---

I was hoping you would have this book to give away. I was already intrigued with the writer, Joel ben Izzy, when he described where he grew up (San Gabriel Valley). Since I grew up there as well, I just had to know where. So I looked Joel up on the internet to see if there was a bio that would tell me exactly where. It didn't; but it gave an email address. So I wrote to him and lo and behold, he wrote me back. It wasn't exactly the city I grew up (I still live there) but close enough. Small world. Thanks for all the good books. I'm never without one.  
Diane S

---

Dear Suzanne: I've just finished reading the excerpt posted from "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness".....Is there a secret? I didn't think this would be a book I'd be interested in reading at all, but it was very intriguing once I started reading and I'd really like to read the rest of it.

---

I would love a copy of "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness." At first, I didn't think it was a story that would hold my attention. Just not my style. But since I am always looking for meaning and you said you found some in this book - I decided to give it a go

---

Suzanne, thank you for bringing this book to my attention. It reminded me of my grandfather, who I haven't thought of in such a long time. He died in a coal mine cave-in, in 1947. He was a great storyteller. I remember my cousins and I sitting at his feet, listening to his stories. We were so young and didn't realize we should have been remembering those stories.

---

I am certainly going to tell everyone I know about this book. It will be my gift to everyone on my gift list this year. It is moving, inspiring and also entertaining. It is as you said "one of those 'perfect timing' moments". Thanks again for telling me about it. Love reading with you. Barbara

---

I think it is a great book. I like the way he takes an ancient tale and relates it to a modern happening. Please enter me in the contest for "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness". Bill

---

Suzanne--What a lovely book. The tone is just right--a little fantastical, but it is about a real life. I don't think many authors could get this tone and make it seem so effortless. I would love to own the book and re-read it more than once. Thanks for choosing it for this week's reading.-Laura

---

All I can say is thanks for sharing this book. With all the readers you touch it must feel good to know some of us will be as touched as you were reading this. I am in a similar family situation myself. It is good to read with you!  
Thank you, Liz S

---

I rushed out and got the book beggar king...its great. I am half way through. thank you for the great reading.  
carmela

---

I must have a copy of this book. If I don't win one of your 15 copies, I will just have to go out and buy it! Lisa

---

Dear Suzanne,

I really like this weeks preview book. I think this seems like a unique story (stories). Really makes you think about life. I will continue the read and share it with my mom and sister. Thanks for another read I might have missed out on if not for you. Dawn

---

Dear Suzanne,

I didn't think at first that I would like it. When I started to read it, I thought,"Oh no, another religious book that will be boring." Then I started to read it and was hooked. The writing style is easy to read and entertaining. It wasn't the least bit boring and had me wanting to read more. Being a school teacher, I loved the little stories interspersed in the big picture. Thanks for sharing. Pat

---

Suzanne,

I appreciate your sharing your delight with "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness". I began to read Chapter 1, and wanted more. that one chapter was full of inspiration, and really kept me interested in what the author was saying. He is a gifted writer and storyteller. What a great gift. Thanks again

---

Dear Suzanne,

This is a book I have to finish. Well written, interesting story. I'm hooked. Thanks for helping me find this year's Christmas gifts. I always give books!

---

Susan

I would like to be entered to win a copy of Joel ben Izzy's book. I have enjoyed the preview and look forward to more. Thanks. Anne P

---

Hi Suzanne,

Thank you very much for this selection. The blending of the personal and story threads is intriguing, and I am very much taken by various points that make one stop and ponder. I will have to end the suspense that I am sure will be there tomorrow when the last section ends by buying the book. Rosemary

---

Dear Suzanne,

Wow...I did not want to give this book a chance but I finally did. Not sure why but I did not. I am blown away by the writing and the experiences. I love it and want to have more. Thanks for more than one day of books as that is why I finally started to read this one. Thanks for all of your book club selections, the best on the internet in my opinion!!!!!! Diane P

---

Hi Suzanne,

I always look forward to reading your column. Thank you for letting us in on your life. It's nice to know someone is tackling things head on and, most of the time, able to stay positive about it. And thanks for being honest about the times when you have a hard time. There's no friend that I appreciate more than one that is "real" and willing to share her honest feelings. Even though you don't know me, I still consider you my good friend.

Beggar King is an Incredible book! Talk about one that appeals to my taste. I love stories of personal journey, and Joel ben Izzy is certainly on one that can inspire all of us. I know it's been said before, and I mean it, too: Thank you for choosing this book. I'm putting it on my Christmas list. I can't wait until tomorrow... and I'm really hoping Santa brings it to me for Christmas!

---

What an interesting read! I started a book club a little over a year ago with 12 women and this would make the perfect book for our discussions. Once again, you've given me a introduction to a book that I wouldn't have given myself! Thanks for the daily visits! Barbara W

---

I am really enjoying The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness. This is one I will need to finish when the week is over and you start a new book! Nina L

---

I love this book! Can't wait to get a copy! Great idea for each chapter beginning...wonderful

---

I love the beginning of 'The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness!' Can't wait to read the rest.

---

"Suzanne, I truly love this book by Joel ben Izzy. The first thing I do in the morning is get to the computer to read. I have already reserved the book at the library." Thanks for all the good books. Verna

---

wow! This sounds like my kind of book! I would love to be entered to win The Beggar King Dianne F

---

I already am in love with Joel and his stories. Hopefully I will win one of the books and if not, I must buy it. Please Joel - more, more more, JoANN

---

Suzanne, My daughter was having a particularly difficult time in school this week and after I read the prologue from "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness" I decided to send her the Chinese story concerning "blessing/curse". Her response back was "thanks, I needed that". Those are some of the most joyfull words that I could have received from her. Thanks I needed that, too. Griff

---

This has got to be one of the best books i have read in a long time. I cant wait to get a copy . Your books are the best by far. I havent found a bad one yet. Betty

---

Dear Suzanne, I read the preview of this book and loved the premise of it. I can't wait to read more and see what happens. It reminds me of two other books, The Alchemist by Paul Coelho and The Treasure by Uri Shulevitz. Both of these books remind us that happiness is right under our noses if only we will recognize it, and I suspect that is what Joel ben Izzy is telling us too. I enjoy your daily e-mail messages as much as the snippets of books that they accompany. Thanks for your thoughts! Beth B

---

I am enjoying this book very much. It is life in it's real sense. I have seen so often that the thing we cherish most is often what is taken from us. One has to totally rethink life again but this time with much faith. How often you hear someone say they are blessed and would never go back because their life as been enriched. We learn so much from others and how they handle their "story". Thank you for bringing this book to our attention. I am trying to reserve a copy, and thus far have had no luck. Thanks again, Sharon

---

Thanks so much for The Beggar King... I am totally intrigued and definitely want to finish this one. I love the story of Solomon and his ring. It seems that even Solomon was not wise enough to be humble. Claudia

---

This is not a book I would have been interested in reading, without sampling it through your service. After reading the section you published, I wplan to look it up at my library. Utilizing the folk stories (also intresting by the way) and the fables as the skeleton of Bin Izzy's life story is fascinating---Sue

---

Hi from Kentucky!

What a good read! ben Izzy (I even love his choice of name!) certainly knows how to tell tales and weave his own life's tale into the mix. Thanks for putting us on to this one! Judy

---

Hi Suzanne! What a wonderful book! I love Jewish wisdom! Jesus grew up with it, and enhanced the wisdom even more! I know I'd not be able to put this book down if it were in my hands at this moment. My day (and probably half the night) would be spent devouring it. Thank you for introducing this great read! Sybil

---

What a great book! Thanks for sharing this with me. I would love to win a copy. But if I don't win it I'll buy it. With 2 kids, a small business to run and husband working as out of state as a road warrior M-F I don't have a lot of personal time to read anymore. But I will definitely make time for this book. Thanks, Ann

---

I've just started your online book club. I am enjoying all the books including the extra one by Joel ben Izzy. His style is intriguing, you keep wanting more. My father used to say "laugh with others or cry alone, it's all in how you want to handle life". Ben Izzy's father has the same outlook on life as my father. I feel a bond with him. Keep the good books rolling

I'm looking forward to each morning read more than usual - to be surprised by Joel. Can I call him Joel? I think, due to his style of writing, he would want me to call him Joel. Joel has surprised me each day - whether it's a turn in the story, or in the way he turns a sentence. This is a friend I like to have. One who is honest, who surprises me, and shares his life. Joel does that. I want to read more. Thanks Suzanne.

---

Wow! That's a great stopping point for this excerpt! It would have made me definitely want to read the book, even if I didn't already. I like the way each chapter starts with a story. It's like a research paper where you have to have and introduction and a conclusion with everything you want to say in between. The story gives you a clue as to what the chapter's about and at the end, he lets you know why he picked that particular story. I am definitely going to have to get this book! Sara S

---

Dear Suzanne, This is one of the best - so far. I'm referring of course to The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy. This guy can write - would love to hear him tell stories. Hey, if I get one of your 15 books I'll be able to find out if he gets his voice back. If not I guess I'll have to buy it. Keep up the good work. Lon

---

Dear Suzanne:

I just finished reading the sample of Joel ben Izzy's book, "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness", and all I can say is, thank you so much for introducing me (and all your other readers) to this fascinating book. I intend to not only get myself a copy, but several friends and relatives of mine will be the lucky recipients of this book as gifts this year. Thanks again, and 'it's so good to read with friends". Best Wishes, Janice B.

---

Suzanne--What a lovely book. The tone is just right--a little fantastical, but it is about a real life. I don't think many authors could get this tone and make it seem so effortless. I would love to own the book and re-read it more than once. Thanks for choosing it for this week's reading.-Laura

---

Hi Suzanne,

I have read the excerpt from Joel ben Izzy's *The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness* and I certainly intend to get the book as soon as possible. I love the style and can't wait to read the rest of the story. It has captured me!

---

Dear Suzanne,

I feel like I am sitting in the audience in the grip of Joel's story, his story. My own throat is parched with a thirst for the rest of the story. I can't wait to devour it. Thanks a million for sharing this one!! Lori H

---

I am the reader in the family. However, every once in a while I read a book that I think my husband will enjoy and then he will usually at least give it a try. I printed off an excerpt of this book and took it home. His response was wow. I am checking with my library to see if they have this book. It is a must read for us! Thanks for calling this book and many others to my attention. I don't think I would have selected this book otherwise.

---

Dear Suzanne: "THE BEGGAR KING AND THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS" is the most "fiction-like" non-fiction I think I have ever read. I wish Joseph Campbell were still around to sit down and talk with Joel ben Izzy, who would immediately lay to rest any fears he had that our present-day world has outgrown its mythologies. In telling his own story in parallel with the sort of ancestral tales he brings forward, Joel demonstrates that the journey of Ulysses, and Hercules, and Luke Skywalker, is still to be traveled. The same journey has a separate path for each of us, and the greatest teachers will encourage us to find our own, rather than follow theirs. Joseph Campbell wrote, "Follow your bliss and doors will open where there were no doors before." For those alive to look, the stories of Joel ben Izzy will frame some of those doors. Suzy D

---

*The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness* is so intriguing. I've loved Aesop's Fables, but this is perfect with a story from mythology at the beginning of each chapter. It is spell-binding. Thanks for introducing us to so many wonderful books, Carolyn

---

Suzanne,

Thank you, thank you, thank you for this book! I have been in the midst of some very stressful times, worrying about money, health, deaths of loved ones, work life, home life - you name it. Amazing how a simple story can change your view just when you need it the most. "Sometimes a curse can be a blessing." Thanks so much for your book club, I love being able to preview these great finds I would never have seen otherwise! Bridget M

---

Suzanne,

I'm so busy and therefore am very selective of my reading time. I have to buy this book. It pulled me in immediately. Joel ben Izzy writes of something that has been a part of humanity since we learned to speak, yet this is a modern story. I can't wait to read it all. Diane

---

Hi Suzanne,

I enjoy reading with you every morning, and I love this week's selection, *The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness*. In fact, I like it so much that I couldn't wait for this morning's email. I went to a local bookstore last night to read more of the book.

---

Suzanne,

I've been reading with you for the last couple of months, and my list of books to read has grown immensely. Yesterday morning, I read the sample of "The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness," by Joel ben Izzy, and could not wait to get to the library, so I could read the entire book. I picked up the book from library, on my way home from work, and have just about finished it. That's a major feat for me, because with a full-time job, 3 active teenage sons, husband & home to take care of, my reading time is usually limited to "just before bed". I about 50 pages left, and I already know that this is a book I want to read again. I am going to find a quiet place for lunch, so I can finish the book. I plan on sharing this book with my friends and family. So far, I've laughed and cried while reading the book, you see, my husband was also diagnosed with cancer at a young age (35). I know first hand what the spouse goes through, but I don't think I ever really understood what my husband had to endure. This book has really enlightened me. I'd like to thank Joel for sharing his stories with us, and to thank you for passing on this book to the Book Club. Thanks! Trish L

---

Dear Suzanne, I've been enjoyed the preview of this book. English is my second language, and I read your books every day in order to get more vocabulary, and improve it every day. I think reading is a good way to learn another language, and I like how the author uses a simple way to tell us about his experiences, and how he draws parallels between them and his life. Thank you very much for your book club. I really enjoy it every day. Beatriz R

---

I'd really love to read the book! The details interest me. The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness is very interesting. I look forward to reading the rest of it Colleen

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Dear Suzanne I love the excerpt from "The Beggar King..." and I especially loved learning about Joel ben Izzy. How wonderful it would be to hear him tell these stories in person! Not only would I love a copy for myself but this is the kind of book that "begs" to be shared! I am going to suggest it to my book club - what a great discussion we could have! Thanks for your daily "gifts". Can't think of a better way to start my day! Megan B

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I can't wait to read the rest! I was hooked from the very beginning. My son has just finished a class on studying the bible and I am enjoying rereading the stories with him. I am also having a very trying time being a stay-at-home mom of twins that are in the "TERRIBLE two" stage. I find myself being "terrible" too. So I am in desperate need of some wonderful words of wisdom and a good book!

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I've enjoyed this book so much I am sending a print out all over the office!

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Suzanne,

Great selection. We have lost the art of storytelling in all our frantic lives. This is a captivating book. I can't wait for the final segment. Peace. Mark

---

Suzanne, I didn't think this sounded interesting at all when I first read about it, but now the author has me hooked. I'd really like to know what happens with him and how he handles his illness. Thanks for whetting my appetite once again. Karen B

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Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for writing those brief paragraphs that introduce us to books in other genres at the bottom of your column. I don't always read them, but I find myself drawn to The Beggar King and the Pursuit of Happiness. His storytelling skills are excellent. It "hooks" the reader and leaves us hungry for the rest of the story... (I've learned a little about storytelling from a parish nurse at a nearby church in the Washington, DC area where I live and work.)

It reminds me of my mom - she would read the Brothers Grimm fairy tales to us in the original German...and if you know anything about the original tales, they are a bit different than the Disney versions. Mr. ben Izzy, thank you for touching us with your talent...and please don't stop! Look forward to finishing the book.

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Hi Suzanne. Thanks for another great book. I liked the title of this one as soon as I read it. Anything that has to do with the secret to happiness jumps right out at me. What a sad statement that must sound like. I only mean that I find myself drawn to hear / read about how other people got to where they are, especially if they are successful and happy. I really enjoy the style of this book and what the author has to offer so far. I look forward to finishing the book (whether I win a copy or not). Thanks! Scott

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Suzanne ~

I can see why this book would speak to your heart; it speaks to mine too. My father is the most optimistic man. He's also a realist, but he believes attitude is everything, and I love that about him. When I read this sample, it felt almost like hearing my father speak to me, and I love talking to him. So, I enjoyed it very much and I hope to read the rest of it soon. Thanks! ~ Francine

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Dear Suzanne,

The other day I started to read the excerpt from The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness then didn't have time to finish it. I am so glad I took the time today to read the rest of the excerpt. I have been feeling very unhappy lately due to some life changes so I felt a connection to the author immediately as he faces a life altering event in his life. I was so disappointed when I went online to reserve it through our library which I do with many of your selections and did not find it available. I will need to let the library know that they need to add this book to their collection. I look forward to learning how the author continues to weave ancient stories through his first hand experience. Thanks for all you do. Martha

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This book is much more interesting than many fiction books. I look forward to reading the entire book. Thanks for this choice. Pat S

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Suzanne,

I'm probably too late to receive one of the ben Izzy books, but I thought I'd write you a note nevertheless. (Who knows?) I've read the reviews of the book, as well as the online excerpt. It strikes me as the kind of story I enjoy, in which a character grows in the course of a life's journey. (I may have been the only one in my tenth grade English class who actually liked reading The Odyssey!) I also love listening to a good yarn and I suspect that this book is filled with them. If you still have any copies left, I'd like to have one. If not, I'm off to Barnes & Noble!

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Suzanne, The preview of the 'The Beggar King And The Secret Of Happiness' is wonderful. His weaving of the stories into the fabric of his own story would seem too clever in the hands of many people. His use of this brings a real authenticity to his story. Dan C

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Well, that is a book I will read to the end. It is funny how we work so hard in life only to find that god had other plans for us. Plans that are revealed when we least expect them. You learn a lot from people's experience especially one of a storyteller. I can't wait to find out what happens to the storyteller.

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Suzanne,

A very interesting book - instantly grabs your attention and holds it in a strange way. It reminds me of "A Painted House" by John Grisham in that respect.

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The book is a very good choice. I enjoy listening to anyone tell a good story and of course reading them makes life much more interesting. Helps time pass too!

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This one I would love to have on cd or tape to listen to in the car commuting. I would a great start to my day.

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This book has me intrigued - I started reading just yesterday and already can't wait for the next email. I think the fact that it's presented as a story really sticks with you. I find myself re-thinking the story in my mind the rest of the day. I can't wait to read more!

---

Loved the excerpts! I enjoyed all the story telling and it left me curious for more. I also enjoyed the back and forth method between the stories of his life and the stories he told. Karlyn B

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Hi Suzanne,

I recently joined the online book club quite by accident one day while surfing the Des Moines Public Library website. "Beggar" is the first book I've had an opportunity to read online and I'm hooked! I've thoroughly enjoyed this read...thank you for bringing it to me! (Now I MUST get a copy of this book so I can finish it...ha ha.)

Sincerely, Sharon S.

---

I loved the excerpt and will go out looking for a copy as soon as I can. Somehow there is a real relationship built between reader and writer in a non-fiction story - a story of a life you think you're living alone, but need to know you are not.

I've so enjoyed your book "teasers" from week to week. There are times when I get very far behind and sometimes have to delete some because they take up too much room in my e-mail, and it hurts!! Thank you so much and keep up the good work! Debby B

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Thanks Suzanne I'm enjoying this book. Thanks for sharing. Maureen H

---

After reading the first 4 sections of The Begger King and the secret of Happiness I have found Joel Ben Izzy to be a gifted story teller. The format of his story reminds me of a Greek tragedy. The Dramatic Irony consists in the contrast between the basis of the disease and the and the cure. While I was reading the story I was able to draw my own conclusions based on the real state of the characters and my own conceptions of reality. There are not many authors today that are able to tell a story like the greek playwrights. I'm sure this work will touch in someway whoever reads it.

---

Hi Suzanne, I started to read the Beggar King and was completely mesmerized. What a great book, all of the bible stories, old proverbs and mythology. The writing just reels the reader into the story. I'm not sure how this will end but I must finish the book. Thanks for all the great reading, Florence

---

Mr Izzy may have lost all when he got throat cancer but I actually did feel that it was his re-birth. His storytelling is fantastic and so personal and touching. This is one of the books I will be buying for Christmas. Congratulations Mr Izzy and please continue. Marie B

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Dear Suzanne,

The beggar king is an extraordinary book! I quite enjoyed it! Quite breath-taking. Ruby

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What an enthralling book. I was just going to take a peek and go back to my other work, and before I knew it I was four pages in. I usually shy away from non-fiction, but this reads like a novel. Like Joel's mother, I love to hear and read stories, but don't have a gift to tell them. This also touched me because I'm in the midst of a mid-life religious crisis where I'm searching for "truth" and I've always been fascinated by Jewish stories and Hebrew culture. If I don't win a copy, I'll soon be looking to buy one! Marie E

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WOW! This book is going straight to the top of my must-read list! Kathy G

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Hi Suzanne,

I'm definitely going to finish reading The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness. It's like no book I've read before! It seems like it will be inspirational, and I know it will continue to be very interesting. Thanks, Erin

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I loved it! What more can I say? Tawnee

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I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed the excerpt of this book, my best friends Mother-in-law just died of cancer so it seems very relevant. Thank you Rachel A

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Really enjoyed the reads this week of The Beggar King and The Secret of Happiness by Joel Ben Izzy. Please enter me in the drawing for a copy. Thanks, Wanda P

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Dear Suzanne, I didn't read this book earlier in the week as it didn't capture my attention, but I went back yesterday and read from the website. It is a wonderful book! Please enter me in your drawing to win a copy, as our library doesn't seem to have it! Thanks. Ellen

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Suzanne:

I would not chose this book because of it's style. But these previews have opened up my eyes to something enjoyable. Thank you! Debra S

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Suzanne - Thanks for sharing this book - I feel sad that we've come to the end of the installments. I feel this way at the end of a good book sometimes, but am surprised to feel this way at this early point in the book! The author weaves so much together so effortlessly - the present, the past, story history, feelings, etc. Reading it is like being on a magic carpet ride. I can't wait to read more. Thanks again. Laurie

---

Suzanne, You've opened my eyes to yet another world. Had I found this in the library, I would never have picked it up. Because of you, I will. Thanks for your efforts, Suzanne. They are very much appreciated Dan Z

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Hi Suzanne, Well, I had already decided not to read this weeks selection as I just was not interested in the subject matter. (I don't need anymore advise or life's lessons!) However, after seeing all the rave reviews, curiosity got the better of me and yes now I'm hooked. HaHa! No surprise there! I can't wait to read the rest - I'll be searching for a copy today. :- ) Thanks for keeping me in "good" books! I really appreciated it. Linda

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i have got to get this book, its great, the issues he has are so my life, i can fit each story to a part of my life but his stories make it not so boring. i have got to borrow some \$\$\$ to get the book cause i just can wait to finish. thanks for this opportunity to view this book, i normally don't get excited i just compile my list of must reads and get them when i can. thanks debbie

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Suzanne, I'm enjoying this facinating book. I hope to be able to read the entire thing. Thanks, Diana

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What a fantastic book! The Beggar King... is written so differently than most books. From his life to the stories that parallel/relate to his life and his fathers. I can't wait to read more! Michele W

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I love the mix of past and present...and I love intriguing non fiction books so this is a must read! DJ Rosemund

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I was hooked by the first page. I went online directly to the library to put it on hold, now the hard part...waiting for it to come in.

I hope the rest of the book is as good as the first few pages are. Thanks for turning me onto "good reads!" Colleen G. Beautiful N.Y.

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My husband & I are both avid readers and enjoy exploring your book chapters. I like to read at least 2-3 days before making up my mind if I want to continue the book. The Beggar Kind & the Secret of Happiness was one I knew I would read after the second day! Because we are now in our mid sixties we have learned to respect the phrase "people make plans & God laughs." And we personally have had that 'perfect' time in our lives changed in a moment to never quite be the same again. None of us plan the negatives, we are a most postive people and so learn to deal with 'the hand dealt to us:') For lack of better words, I connect with this author! Glenda S

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I loved the excerpt from the "The Beggar King" so much that I forwarded it to my friend. I cannot get internet access right now due to the fact that I am forward deployed in the Persian Gulf, but I would love to be entered in the drawing for the free book because I plan on reading it in its entirety. Thanks so much for the Book Club. I enjoy it very much!!!

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Dear Suzanne, I am always so grateful for the books you share with us. I love to read, and because of the book club I am able to discover and explore so many books that I might otherwise never have come across or thought of buying. I have enjoyed the excerpt of the book "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness". The author's easygoing narrative style holds the attention, and the stories bear simple truths that encourage and motivate. Thanks again for sharing yet another treasure of a read with us.

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Hi Suzanne, I have been following your online suggestions for a couple of years and adding some to my bookclub which is 6 years strong next month. We read mostly fiction and once in awhile a classic, or a biography. I read some of The Beggar King.... and it caught my interest -- it certainly does not have the feel of non-fiction, but it is certainly a book that I would like to read, and hopefully pass it on to my bookclub. I could use some inspiration. If you have some books to give away, please consider me. Deborah S

---

I love this book so far! When he found the potato that looked like Eisenhower and then in essence became the entertainer of the family it rang true with my own life. I've always been the one to pull the family together and keep everyone laughing despite the circumstances. This book has really hooked me. I'm so sorry to have to stop reading, for now at least. :o) Fabulous! M

---

Suzanne,

I read a bit of this book, and I would love to read it all. Over the last few years, I have discovered a fascination with storytellers. It began when I read (devoured really) *Women Who Run With Wolves*. After that I re-read stories from my youth with a fresh eye, gaining new insight. This book would be a great addition to my library. Thanks for giving me a chance to sample "The Beggar King & the Secret of Happiness". It's going on my "Books to Read" list immediately. THANKS! -JoDee

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Hi Suzanne!

I had very little time to read this week's excerpts of *THE BEGGAR KING AND THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS* by Joel Ben Izzy, until today when I read them all at once. It had a very big impact on me, personally, as I too have had a thyroidectomy for papillary cancer in 2001. Luckily, I did not have any damage done to my vocal nerve although it is a definite concern in such surgery due to the close proximity of the nerve to the thyroid gland. My only complication was the loss of a parathyroid gland and a subsequent drop in blood calcium post-op which had to be monitored closely for a while. Now I take calcium supplements and synthroid and have twice a year monitoring to make sure there is no reoccurrence of cancer.

I can certainly appreciate the life altering effect the loss of voice had on Ben Izzy, and I am so curious to read the rest the rest of this book to see what lessons he learned from the experience! God, and life, certainly can have other plans for us sometimes when we think we know where we are headed. Thank you again for a preview into a great book! Your friend and fellow reader.

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Suzanne-

I don't usually don't read a lot of nonfiction books, but was pleasantly surprised in reading the "The Beggar King and the Secret of Happiness". I must say that I am Intrigued and WANT to read MORE !! It held my interest, I like all the quotes that he uses from his father , it makes you ponder things a little more. I really enjoy the small version of the book you have enlighten us to, would like to find out more about this story. jana

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